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Lafayette Businesses Ask Residents To Pledge To "Try Lafayette First!"

By *Sophie Braccini*



"Economic times are tough for small businesses and we're all feeling it here in Lafayette," says Lafayette Chamber of Commerce Chief Executive Office Jay Lifson, "Given that there's no bail-out headed our way, each of us has to take responsibility for the future health of our businesses. Working together (Chamber members and non-members alike), we can take collective action to encourage customers to spend more money in Lafayette."

The launch of the campaign is set for December 1st at 3pm. All participating merchants, wearing matching Try Lafayette First t-shirts and carrying placards bearing the name of their businesses, will leave their shops, walk down the sidewalk together and gather at Plaza Park for a rally, at which there will be speakers addressing the importance of shopping locally.

The project was conceived by Shop Lafayette Committee Chair Dave Simpson, owner of the Lafayette Bookstore. He wants to remind people of the many reasons why supporting local merchants makes sense. "Most residents appreciate the cultural value of a vibrant downtown filled with a wide variety of unique businesses and boutiques," he says, "by shopping locally we will save on gas and parking and

create a strong tax-base by circulating money in town versus sending it elsewhere." He also reminds residents that local businesses donate generously to schools and non-profit organizations throughout the year.

"We want shoppers to have fun and get rewards beyond the pride of keeping their community vibrant," adds Simpson, "We will ask them to 'Try Lafayette First' by signing a simple pledge. All pledges will be collected and people who signed them will instantly become eligible for a drawing for over \$1,000 in Lafayette merchant gift certificates." Customers will be able to sign the pledge in person in the stores, by email, through posters, and on the websites of participating merchants.

"This program is just the beginning of what will be a continuous, focused, coordinated campaign to improve the bottom-line of Lafayette businesses," says Lifson, "With the economic challenges we all face, there's no time like the present."

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